

Amendments to the Drawings:

Figure 1 has been amended to overcome the Examiner's objection under 37 C.F.R. 1.83(a). Specifically, amended Fig. 1 schematically illustrates the environment connecting device **10** is used in as described in the specification. A replacement sheet containing amended Fig. 1 is submitted herewith as Exhibit 1 pursuant to 37 C.F.R. 1.121(d).

Figure 2 has been amended to overcome the Examiner's objection under 37 C.F.R. 1.83(a). Specifically, amended Fig. 2 shows template folding lines **21** and **22** as described in the specification. A replacement sheet containing amended Fig. 2 is submitted herewith as Exhibit 2 pursuant to 37 C.F.R. 1.121(d).

Figure 3 has been amended to overcome the Examiner's objection under 37 C.F.R. 1.83(a). Specifically, amended Fig. 3 schematically illustrates the environment connecting device **30** is used in as described in the specification. A replacement sheet containing amended Fig. 3 is submitted herewith as Exhibit 3 pursuant to 37 C.F.R. 1.121(d).

Figure 5 has been amended to overcome the Examiner's objection under 37 C.F.R. 1.83(a). Specifically, amended Fig. 5 schematically illustrates the environment connecting device **70** is used in as described in the specification. Amended Fig. 5 corrects reference numerals **79** and **71** (left mirror image of device) to **74** and **77**, respectively, adds coordinate **X**, **Y** and **Z** axes, and deletes the duplicate top reference numeral **70**. A replacement sheet containing amended Fig. 5 is submitted herewith as

Exhibit 4 pursuant to 37 C.F.R. 1.121(d).

Figure 6 has been amended to overcome the Examiner's objection under 37 C.F.R. 1.83(a). Specifically, amended Fig. 6 adds reference numerals **100, 102, 104, 106, 108, 110, 112, and 114** to indicate the first end, second end, first side, and second side, respectively, on each component of connecting device **70**. A replacement sheet containing amended Fig. 6 is submitted herewith as Exhibit 5 pursuant to 37 C.F.R. 1.121(d).

Figure 7 has been amended to overcome the Examiner's objection under 37 C.F.R. 1.83(a). Specifically, amended Fig. 7 schematically illustrates the environment connecting device **90** is used in as described in the specification. A replacement sheet containing amended Fig. 7 is submitted herewith as Exhibit 6 pursuant to 37 C.F.R. 1.121(d).

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Applicant has studied the Office Action of September 19, 2006 and made amendments to the specification, claims and drawings to place the application in condition for allowance. No new matter has been added.

Claims 7 - 8, and 10 - 12 have been cancelled without prejudice to filing future continuation application(s). Claims 1 - 2, and 4 - 6 have been amended, as indicated hereinabove. Claims 3, 9, and 13 - 27 have been withdrawn without prejudice to filing future divisional application(s). Claims 3, 9, and 13 - 27 are drawn to nonelected species, there being currently no allowable generic claim. New claims 28 - 31 have been added. Therefore, claims 1 - 2, 4 - 6, and 28 - 31, inclusive, are presently pending.

Drawing Objections

Figures 1 - 3, and 5 - 7 have been amended, as indicated hereinabove, to overcome the Examiner's objections. Amended Figs. 1 - 3, and 5 - 7 are being enclosed herewith as replacement sheet exhibits, respectively. The amended figures are believed to be in compliance with 37 C.F.R. 1.83(a).

Claim Rejections Under 35 U.S.C. §112

Claim 7 stands rejected under 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph, regarding the claim recitations "first face" and "second face." Claim 7 has been cancelled, as indicated hereinabove, rendering the Examiner's rejections thereto moot.

In view of the foregoing amendments and remarks, Applicant respectfully requests withdrawal of the §112 claim rejections.

Claim Rejections Under 35 U.S.C. §102

Claims 1 - 2 and 4 - 6 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being anticipated by Turner (U.S. Patent 5,111,632). Turner discloses an expandable joist hanger including a pair of side brackets with oppositely directed flanges for fixture to an interposed joint.

Applicant respectfully submits that claims 1 - 2 and 4 - 6, as currently amended, are patentably different from the expandable joist hanger of Turner. Specifically, there is no teaching in Turner in regard to a connecting device being constructed from a substantially planar template, as recited in amended claims 1 - 2 and 4 - 6. There is also no teaching in Turner of a template comprising a centrally disposed base portion being flanked at its first and second sides by substantially wing-shaped lateral sections whereby each lateral section is foldable along a respective demarcation line, as recited in amended claims 1 - 2 and 4 - 6.

Turner teaches away from Applicant by disclosing each “of the side brackets ... [being] made of, for example, galvanized sheet steel cut and shaped to form a beam attachment flange 13 and integral joist attachment flange 15 ...” Col. 1, lines 65 - 68. (See Figs. 1 - 4).

Applicant respectfully submits that for a reference, such as Turner, to function under 35 U.S.C. §102, the reference must within the four corners of that document

disclose each and every element that is set forth in the claim against which it is applied. Furthermore, every element of the claimed invention, as recited in the claims, must be disclosed either specifically or inherently by a single prior art reference. See *Minnesota Mining & Mfg. Co. v. Johnson & Johnson Orthopaedics, Inc.*, 976 F.2d 1559, 1565 (Fed.Cir.1992); *Scripps*, 927 F.2d at 1576-77; *Lindemann Maschinenfabrik GMBH, v. American Hoist & Derrick Co.*, 730 F.2d 1452, 1458 (Fed.Cir.1984).

Claims 7 - 8 and 10 - 12 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being anticipated by Turner. Claims 7 - 8 and 10 - 12 have been canceled, as indicated hereinabove, rendering the Examiner's rejections thereto moot.

In view of the above comments and amendments, Applicant respectfully requests withdrawal of the §102 claim rejections in regard to claims 1 - 2 and 4 - 6, as currently amended.

Conclusion

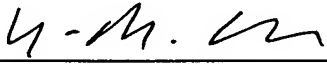
No amendment made was related to the statutory requirements of patentability unless expressly stated herein. Applicant believes that the application, as presently amended, is in condition for allowance. If for any reason the Examiner finds the application other than in condition for allowance, the Examiner is respectfully requested to call the undersigned attorney at the telephone number listed herein below to discuss any steps necessary for placing the application in condition for allowance. In the event that any additional fees are due, the Examiner is authorized to charge USPTO Deposit

Account # 03-2030. A duplicate of this authorization is enclosed herewith.

Respectfully submitted,

CISLO & THOMAS LLP

Date: March 7, 2007


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DMC/MM:srh/cjh

Enclosures:

Certificate of 1st Class Mailing
Petition for Extension of Time (3 months) including Amendment Transmittal
Drawing Exhibits 1 – 6 (Replacement Sheets 1/8, 2/8, 3/8, 5/8, 6/8 and 7/8)
Acknowledgement Postcard

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